



**TOWN OF GRAFTON**  
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## PLANNING BOARD

### **Planning Board Report: ZBL-2012-1** **Petition to Amend the Grafton Zoning By-Laws to Allow for "Backyard Chickens"** **Article 49, May 14, 2012 Town Meeting**

At their meeting on April 9, 2012 the Grafton Planning Board conducted a public hearing to consider a proposed amendment to the Grafton Zoning By-law (ZBL) submitted by the Agricultural Commission to allow for "Backyard Chickens". Board members present were Chairman Bruce Spinney III, Vice Chairman Stephen Qualey, Clerk James Walsh III, Members Robert Hassinger and David Robbins, and Associate Member Sargon Hanna. Those individuals wishing to speak to the proposed amendment were heard.

The proposed amendment would add a definition for "Backyard Chickens" under Section 2 - Definitions.

**Backyard Chickens:** Raising and keeping of common, domestic female chicks and hens (no roosters) for personal consumption and enjoyment. Limited to six (6) per lot, and must be physically contained within a dedicated space of...at minimum rate... four (4) square feet per hen.

It would also amend Section 3.2.3.1 as follows:

Under Section 3.2.3.1 – Use regulation Schedule: Accessory Uses:

	<u><b>A</b></u>	<u><b>R40</b></u>	<u><b>R20</b></u>	<u><b>RMF</b></u>	<u><b>NB</b></u>	<u><b>CB</b></u>	<u><b>I</b></u>	<u><b>OLI</b></u>	<u><b>FP</b></u>	<u><b>WSPO</b></u>
13. Backyard Chickens	Y	Y	Y	S	S	S	S	S	S	---

The article was reviewed by Town Counsel for compliance with state laws as well as to form and was found satisfactory.

The Board noted that this amendment would allow up to six chickens by right in three residential districts and by Special Permit in all other districts. This would allow the Planning Board to look at applications on a case by case basis in those zoning districts, consistent with current regulations. It also wished to note, as referred to in comments from the Conservation Commission, that regardless of the by-right zoning status, that residents would still be subject to all other applicable rules and regulations.

The Board recommends to the Agricultural Commission that it amend the last sentence of the definition to read: Limited to six (6) per lot, and must be physically contained within a dedicated space of **at least** four (4) square feet per hen.

Based on the testimony received and its deliberations on the merits of the proposed amendment, the Planning Board voted unanimously **TO RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE** of the "Backyard Chickens" article.